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FACT SHEET

MANAGEMENT OF HOME-GENERATED SHARPS

Recent changes in California law ([Medical Waste Management Act](#)) prevent homeowners from disposing of home-generated sharps into the regular trash. This includes any container used for the collection of solid waste, recyclable materials, or green waste.

Trash is handled by people on manual collection routes, at recycling facilities and at landfills. These people could be stabbed by medical sharps such as needles or lancets that poke through protective clothing, including heavy gloves and boots.

The County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health (DEH), Hazardous Materials Division (HMD) is the local enforcement agency designated by the California Department of Public Health to implement the [Medical Waste Management Act](#).

Definition: Home-generated Sharps waste is defined as disposable hypodermic needles, needles with attached tubing, syringes, blades, lancets, acupuncture needles, and other medical devices that are used to penetrate the skin for self-injection, to deliver medication, or to conduct a blood test.

On or after September 1, 2008, home-generated sharps waste shall be transported only in a sharps container, or other containers approved by the HMD, and shall only be managed at any of the following:

- **A household hazardous waste facility.**
- **A “home-generated sharps consolidation point”.**
- **A medical waste generator’s facility.**
- **A facility through the use of a medical waste mail-back container approved by the California Department of Public Health.**

Transportation: The patient, a member of the patient’s family, or a person authorized by HMD, as the local enforcement agency, can transport home-generated sharps waste.

Household Hazardous Waste Facility: Call your local household hazardous waste agency and inquire if they collect needles (sharps) at their collection facilities or on household hazardous waste collection days. There are several places where you can look for this information:

- Visit www.wastefreesd.org for locations.
- For more information, contact the [County of San Diego Household Hazardous Waste](#) Hotline at: **1-877-R-1-EARTH** (877-713-2784)
- San Diego County Hazardous Materials Duty desk:: (619) 338-2231
- Call 1-800-CLEANUP (1-800-253-2687), a service of [Earth 911](#).
- Visit the [Earth 911](#) Web site.

“Home-Generated Sharps Consolidation Point”:

HMD, may approve a location as a point of consolidation for the collection of home-generated sharps waste, which, after collection, shall be transported and treated as medical waste. An approved consolidation point shall be known as a “home-generated sharps consolidation point.” A home-generated sharps consolidation point is not subject to the permit requirements for consolidating home-generated sharps waste. An operator of a home-generated sharps consolidation point approved pursuant to this section shall not be considered the generator of that waste. A home-generated sharps consolidation point shall comply with the following requirements:

- All sharps waste must be stored in sharps containers.
- Sharps containers ready for disposal must not be held for more than seven days without the written approval of the enforcement agency.

A Medical Waste Generator Facility as a Home-Generated Sharps Consolidation Point:

A registered (permitted) medical waste generator may accept home-generated sharps waste subject to all of the following conditions:

- The patient, a member of the patient’s family, or a person authorized by HMD transports the sharps waste to the registered facility.
- The sharps waste is accepted at a central location at the registered facility and is consolidated with the facility’s medical waste stream.
- A reference to, and a description of how the waste will ultimately be managed are included in the registered facility’s medical waste management plan.

Approved Mail-Back Service:

Some local drugstores or family clinics sell approved pre-paid mail-back sharps containers.

- Visit the [California Department of Public Health](#) - Medical Waste Management website or call (916) 449-5671 for a list of approved mail-back services. <http://www.cdph.ca.gov>
- Or visit www.safeneedledisposal.org